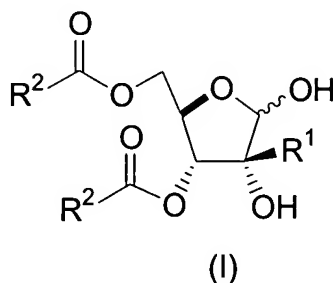


**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

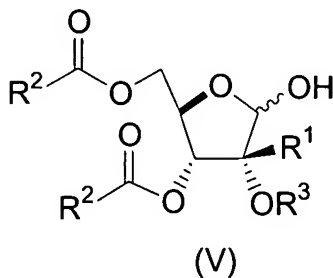
1. (currently amended) A process for preparing a compound of structural formula I:



wherein R<sup>1</sup> is C<sub>2-4</sub> alkenyl, C<sub>2-4</sub> alkynyl, or C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from fluorine, hydroxy, amino, mercapto, C<sub>1-3</sub> alkoxy, and C<sub>1-3</sub> alkylthio; and

R<sup>2</sup> is C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl or aryl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from methoxy, methyl, and fluorine;

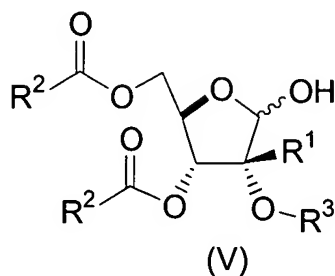
comprising the step of cleaving the R<sup>3</sup> protecting group in a compound of structural formula V:



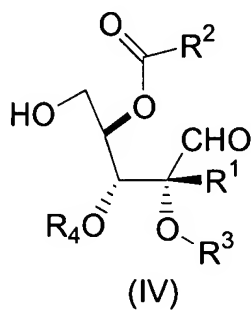
wherein R<sup>3</sup> represents benzyl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from methyl, methoxy, halogen, and nitro;

by catalytic hydrogenolysis.

2. (original) The process of Claim 1 additionally comprising the step of producing a compound of structural formula V:

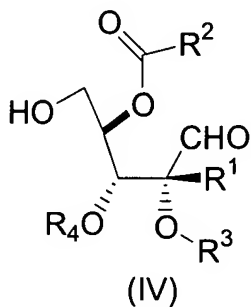


by treating a compound of structural formula IV:

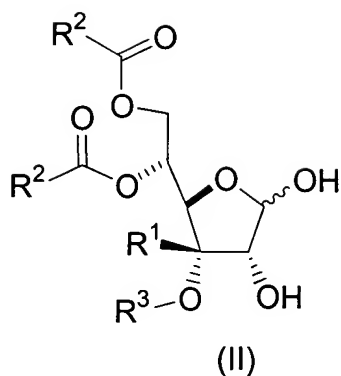


wherein R<sup>4</sup> is hydrogen or formyl;  
with base in an organic solvent.

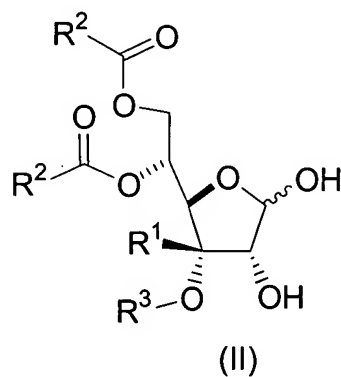
3. (original) The process of Claim 2 additionally comprising the step of producing a compound of structural formula IV:



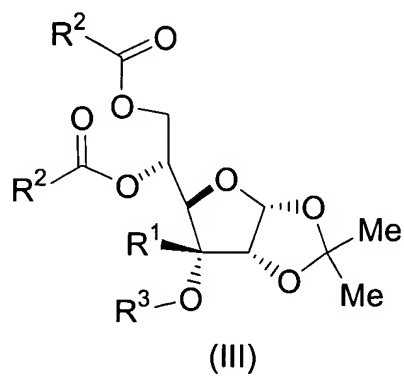
by oxidative cleavage of a compound of structural formula II:



4. (original) The process of Claim 3 additionally comprising the step of producing a compound of structural formula II:



by treating a compound of structural formula III:



with aqueous acid in an organic solvent.

5. (original) The process of Claim 1 wherein R<sup>1</sup> is methyl.

6. (original) The process of Claim 5 wherein R<sup>3</sup> is benzyl.

7. (original) The process of Claim 6 wherein R<sup>2</sup> is phenyl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from methoxy, methyl, and fluorine.

8. (original) The process of Claim 1 wherein R<sup>1</sup> is methyl, R<sup>3</sup> is benzyl, and R<sup>2</sup> is phenyl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from methoxy, methyl, and fluorine.

9. (original) The process of Claim 8 wherein R<sup>2</sup> is 4-methylphenyl.

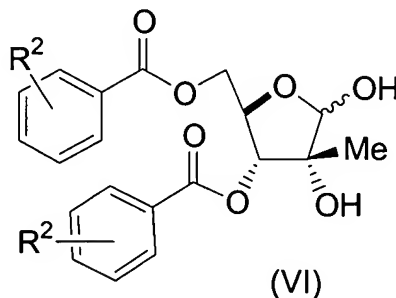
10. (cancelled)

11. (original) The process of Claim 2 wherein said base is diisopropylamine.

12. (original) The process of Claim 3 wherein said oxidative cleavage is carried out with periodic acid.

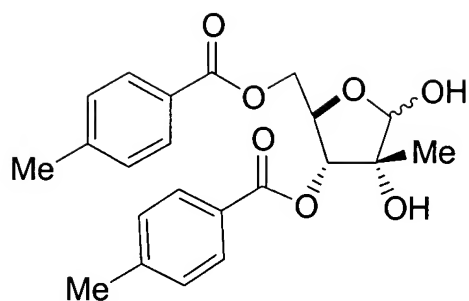
13. (original) The process of Claim 4 wherein said aqueous acid is aqueous tetrafluoroboric acid or aqueous perchloric acid.

14. (original) A compound of structural formula VI:

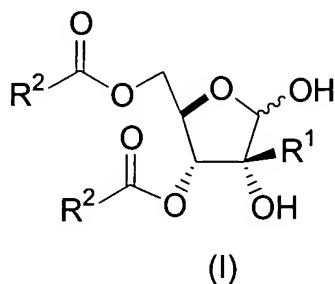


wherein R<sup>2</sup> is hydrogen, methoxy, methyl, or fluorine.

15. (original) The compound of Claim 14 which is

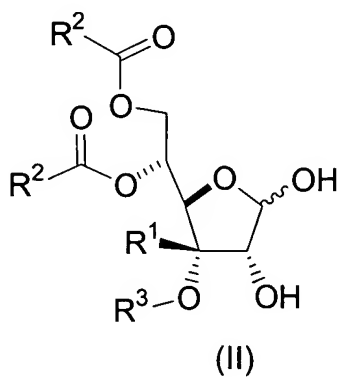


16. (currently amended) A process for preparing a compound of structural formula I:

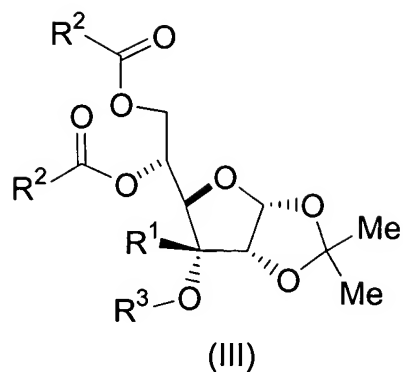


comprising the steps of:

(a) producing a compound of structural formula II:

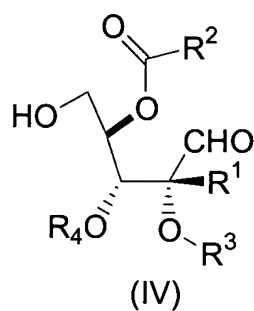


wherein R<sup>3</sup> represents benzyl unsubstituted or substituted with one to three substituents independently selected from methyl, methoxy, halogen, and nitro;  
by treating a compound of structural formula III:



with aqueous acid in an organic solvent;

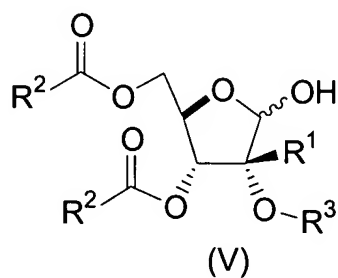
(b) producing a compound of structural formula IV:



wherein  $R^4$  is hydrogen or formyl;

by oxidative cleavage of the compound of structural formula II;

(c) producing a compound of structural formula V:



by treating a compound of structural formula IV with base in an organic solvent; and

(d) cleaving the  $R^3$  protecting group in a compound of structural formula V by catalytic hydrogenolysis.